



KEEPING THINGS SAFE

Tips for ensuring the safety of playing areas

Ensure that:

- the playing area is level, firm and free from obstructions (for example, holes or exposed sprinkler heads)
- permanent fixtures such as goal posts are padded and highly visible
- corner posts and other field posts cannot injure participants on contact (these should be made of cardboard or other 'non-threatening' material)
- there is adequate lighting if playing at night
- there is adequate matting where necessary (for example, gymnastics, high jump)
- perimeter fences are well back from the playing area
- spectators are kept well away from the playing area.

Tips for ensuring the safety of protective equipment

Check that protective equipment:

- fits the participants correctly
- is worn by participants during training and competition
- is regularly checked and maintained
- is specific and appropriate for the sport and the sizes and ages of the participants
- is being used according to the manufacturers' guidelines and the recommendations of the governing sporting body.

Tips for ensuring safety in different environmental conditions

In hot or humid conditions:

- encourage participants to wear loose light-coloured lightweight clothing made from a natural fibre (for example, cotton)
- avoid intense activity in hot or humid conditions and monitor participants carefully for signs of heat illness
- help participants avoid sunburn by encouraging them to slip on a t-shirt, slop on some sunscreen and slap on a hat
- encourage participants to drink plenty of fluid before the activity begins and schedule regular drink breaks during the activity.

In cold and/or wet conditions:

- encourage participants to wear clothing appropriate for cold conditions (for example, dress in layers to trap heat and wear gloves and a hat to reduce heat loss)
- avoid participants standing exposed to the cold for long periods
- encourage participants to change wet clothing as soon as practicable
- alternative venues (for example, indoors) should also be considered, to ensure the safety and wellbeing of participants
- long breaks will cause the body to cool down, so participants should be encouraged to wear warm clothing. Coaches should plan training sessions to avoid long breaks. Another warm-up period may be needed if long rest periods cannot be avoided.

Good coaching practices to reduce risk

- Plan all coaching sessions.
- Follow child protection guidelines.
- Ensure participants warm up prior to activity.
- Don't mismatch participants (consider size/strength, not age).
- Clearly establish the rules for behaviour and activities.
- Ensure the safety of playing areas, facilities and equipment.
- Adapt activities for environmental conditions.

